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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT  
WEDNESDAY, MAY 14, 2008

In Today's Papers

#### Queen Elizabeth II Visits Turkey

All news outlets report on Tuesday, President Abdullah Gul formally welcomed Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom at Cankaya Presidential Palace. During the banquet held in her honor, Queen Elizabeth II underscored the UK-Turkey strategic partnership and delivered supportive messages for Turkey's EU drive. In her speech, Elizabeth II praised Turkey as "a bridge between the East and the West," for taking important forward steps for peace. President Gul said ties between Turkey and Britain have shaped developments in Europe for many centuries. Following Prince Charles' visit to Turkey in November, the visit of the Queen indicates Turkey's increasingly important role in British politics, comment several papers.

On Wednesday, the Queen will visit historic sites in Bursa, the second capital of the Ottoman Empire. On Thursday, they will fly to Istanbul where they will visit a school and the Museum of Modern Arts before hosting a reception aboard the British aircraft carrier HMS Illustrious. The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh leave Turkey on Friday.

#### Party Leaders Argue Over the EU

Bugun, Star, Posta, Hurriyet, Milliyet, Sabah, Vatan: Papers report Prime Minister Erdogan defended EU membership to his party group. Erdogan said, "Turkey cannot remain indifferent to the criticism of the EU." He criticized the main opposition party CHP when he said, "the recent remarks from CHP officials show again that they are not capable of correctly reading conditions in the world and Turkey." Erdogan noted that "saying the EU is against secularism does not comply with reason." CHP leader Deniz Baykal criticized EU officials' remarks regarding his party and said that "The EU should not regard Turkey as a tribe which can be guided." Speaking at his party group meeting, MHP leader Devlet Bahceli referred to EU officials as "The Inspectors of Brussels" and stated that the remarks from EU officials make the tense atmosphere even tenser. Bahceli added that "The EU is serving the AKP like a political lightning rod since the AKP meets all of its demands."

DTP Group Chairman Ahmet Turk Speaks About Repentance Law  
Sabah, Milliyet, Vatan, Star, Radikal, Yeni Safak: Speaking at DTP parliamentary group meeting, DTP group chairman Ahmet Turk said, "Whenever clashes intensify, the prime minister urges PKK members to benefit from the repentance law. The state has been waiting for the PKK to surrender for 20 years. Who would return to Turkey while the inside of the house is in this current state? Besides, the problem is not the return of a few people or the declaration of an amnesty. If you do not shape up the inside of your house and solve the Kurdish problem, one PKK goes and another PKK comes. 28 rebellions have emerged from within this house." Turk added, "I extend condolences to the families of our children who had lost their lives in the clashes. The prime minister, who does not respond to calls of peace, carries political responsibility."

11 PKK Militants Killed in Hakkari  
Hurriyet, Sabah, Radikal, Taraf, Cumhuriyet, Zaman and others report security forces killed 11 PKK militants while pursuing those who attacked a gendarme outpost in Aktutun village in Hakkari and killed six soldiers last week. Radio communication among the PKK members indicated the bodies of some of their slain members were thrown into the River Herki along the border with northern Iraq.

#### Editorial Commentary on the PKK

##### "PKK Is Both Attacking and Dissolving"

Ali Bayramoglu commented in Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak (5/14): "When PKK terrorist incidents began to erupt again three years ago, Prime Minister Erdogan emphasized expanded democracy and welfare programs in order to solve the Kurdish issue. Even though he talked

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about facing the realities and the mistakes of the past, he stressed the importance of the rule of law and democracy. However, his words did not exactly translate into deeds. Instead, the AKP government gradually hardened its stance, and in the end the party even resorted to military-like language when referring to the PKK issue. There are two clear steps to proceed against the PKK issue: Rapprochement with northern Iraqi Kurds and forcing the PKK to give up violence. In addition, the PKK must be convinced to disarm, take advantage of amnesty, and return to the realities of home. In other words, a new political and social climate must be established in order to normalize the Kurdish problem. Treating the Kurdish problem as a security problem will neither end terror nor end the martyring of our soldiers. This was the reality before and it remains the reality today."

##### "The Post-Operation Debrief"

Ertugrul Ozkok wrote in mainstream Hurriyet (5/14): "There are some important details about Turkey's operations in northern Iraq against the PKK. In the recent operations, Turkey worked in coordination with the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and Iran. The U.S. has cooperated well with Turkish armed forces through continuous intelligence. Since this cooperation began, the PKK has started to dissolve. Now, PKK members are moving deeper into northern Iraq. The most important question is what happened to their weapons when they abandoned their posts? According to my credible sources, the PKK passed through check points established by KRG President Barzani's Peshmerge forces, which means they either were asked to surrender weapons at check points or the weapons were taken to depots. The bottom line is this is the first ever international cooperation against the PKK. This cooperation worked; the PKK been dealt a serious blow. Yet, the Kurdish problem is still unresolved. The solution process must also seek to win hearts and minds."

##### Turkish Translator Missing in Iraq

Hurriyet, Milliyet, Sabah, Radikal, Cumhuriyet, Zaman and others report Mustafa Mert, a Turkish translator working at a Turkish-American construction company in Mosul, is missing. Mert's wife said she has not heard from her husband since April 14 when he went to Mosul. The company Mert worked for called Mert's family to say he had been arrested because he was sought by the FBI for a crime committed in the U.S. Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports Mert's friends said he was "in the hands of the Peshmerge."

Women's NGOs Protest Penalty Reductions for Male Assailants

Liberal Radikal reports Mor Cati and KADER, two NGOs who work for women's rights in Turkey, protested outside a courthouse in Istanbul against reductions in penalties in the Turkish Penal Code for men who kill women. The 'unjustifiable provocation' article in the penal code reduces the prison terms for male assailants in cases of homicide against women. Radikal cites an example that in 2005, 32-year old Nermin Ardic said on television she was raped by her father. After this, Ardic was killed by her father; a court, however, reduced the father's sentence from life in prison to 15 years in prison.

TV News:  
NTV

#### Domestic News

- Turkey's top administrative court The Council of State (Danistay) will begin the process of electing its new chair on May 20. Danistay chairperson Sumru Cortoglu retired on Tuesday under the age limit.

- Muhittin Eryilmaz, a retired imam who called for an end to the Turkish ground offensive into northern Iraq at a DTP-held demonstration in Diyarbakir in February, was sentenced to two and a half years in prison on charges of "making propaganda" for an outlawed armed organization.

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- Turkish Union of Chambers (TOBB) president Rifat Hisarciklioglu said growth below 7 percent should be considered a failure for Turkey.

#### International News

- Iranian President Ahmadinejad announced Tuesday Tehran will exert efforts this week to resolve the dispute with Western countries over its nuclear program.

- The charity group Save the Children said Tuesday at least 40 percent of those killed in Myanmar's cyclone were children and hundreds more have lost their parents.

- The official death toll in the Chinese earthquake climbed past 12,000, and more than 18,000 are still buried in the debris of collapsed buildings.

WILSON